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ICELAND: High officials have raised the possibility of manning the Keflavik base with Icelanders or nonmilitary NATO personnel.

Repeating earlier assurances that no hasty action will be taken to end present arrangements, Foreign Minister Agustsson has told the US ambassador that the Icelandic Government intends to remain in NATO and to honor its obligations. He defined them as including maintenance and use by NATO of the Keflavik base, but not necessarily the retention of "foreign" (actually US) armed forces. He admitted that some personnel, Americans or others, would be needed to operate the base. (In fact, it was staffed by US civilians between 1947 and 1951.) Prime Minister Johannesson has wondered if Icelanders might man the installation.

Agustsson's remarks appear to have been prompted by concern over the possible loss of the economic benefits Iceland derives from the base; the airfield is open for civilian as well as military use. He and Johannesson may hope to reach a compromise solution that will maintain the US investment while satisfying their antibase supporters and coalition colleagues by reducing the visibility of the US military presence.

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PANAMA: The Torrijos government is continuing its efforts to undermine the Church's ability to rally public opinion on the Gallego case.

The administration reportedly has ordered the expulsion of several priests and a group of Colombian nuns.

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President Lakas is scheduled to meet with the Pope next week, reportedly to ask that Church agitation be stopped and that the archbishop be replaced. The regime apparently hopes that removing activist clergy and the archbishop will halt Church pressure. The Panamanian Church, however, is strongly committed to uncovering the truth about the Gallego incident and there is no indication that the Pope will accede to Torrijos' requests. Public opinion, moreover, continues to run against the government on this issue and its current initiatives will not win it any additional friends.

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